



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20460

OFFICE OF
SOLID WASTE AND EMERGENCY
RESPONSE

AUG - 7 2000

The Honorable Peter Visclosky
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-1401

Dear Congressman Visclosky:

Thank you for your letter of June 22, 2000 to Administrator Browner regarding a June 8, 2000 letter from your constituent, Ms. Carol Hartman. Ms. Hartman's letter discussed her concern about a lack of federal controls over the dry cleaning and laundry industry. First, she recommended that Congress should revisit the exemption of the dry cleaning and laundry industry from the Fair Labor Standards Act. Second, she expressed support for tough legislation regarding the sale, distribution and handling (including controls over spillage and disposal) of the dry cleaning fluid "perc" (perchloroethylene) to ensure the safety of dry cleaning employees.

Regarding Ms. Hartman's first issue, the Department of Labor (DOL) has jurisdiction in matters related to the Fair Labor Standards Act and employee safety. Thus, we have forwarded Ms. Hartman's letter to Ms. Geri D. Palast, Assistant Secretary of Congressional and Inter-Governmental Affairs at DOL. Ms. Palast can be reached at (202) 693-4600.

The Assistant Secretary's address is:

Geri D. Palast, Assistant Secretary
Office of Congressional and Inter-Governmental Affairs
Department of Labor
200 Constitution Avenue, N.W., Suite 2006
Washington, DC 20210

Concerning Ms. Hartman's second issue, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) implements a number of programs that address management of waste "perc" and control releases of perc to the environment. For example, the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA) mandates that EPA develop a comprehensive set of requirements for the management of wastes. RCRA Subtitle C establishes a federal program to manage hazardous wastes in a manner that

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protects human health and the environment. To this end, there are regulations on the generation, transportation, and treatment, storage and disposal of hazardous wastes. These requirements include provisions for the disposal and spillage of "perc." Other EPA programs also include regulations that address releases of "perc" to the atmosphere or to waterways.

EPA has also made efforts to increase regulatory compliance in the dry cleaning sector by raising awareness of applicable environmental regulations and existing pollution prevention opportunities. For example, EPA's Office of Compliance has developed the following compliance assistance documents for the industry:

- Plain English Version of the Perc Dry Cleaning Regulations. To assist dry cleaners in complying with the various environmental regulations, the Agency developed a readable version of its environmental requirements. The guidance targets the small businesses that comprise a significant portion of the sector.
- Plain Korean Version of the Perc Dry Cleaning Regulations. As an outreach effort to the Korean dry cleaning community, we translated the Plain English Version of the Perc Dry Cleaning Regulations into Korean.
- Profile of the Dry Cleaning Industry. This profile is one of a series containing information on selected major industrial groups. The notebooks focus on key indicators that holistically present air, water, and land pollutant release data, and have been thoroughly reviewed by experts from both inside and outside the EPA.
- Multimedia Inspection Manual. The manual enhances the understanding of field personnel at the State, local and EPA Regional Offices about the requirements of the Clean Water Act (CWA), the Safe Drinking Water Act (SDWA), the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA), and the Clean Air Act (CAA) as they apply to "perc" dry cleaning facilities. The manual also prepares inspectors to offer compliance assistance to the dry cleaning community.

The enclosed fact sheets provide additional information about the Multimedia Inspection Manual and the Profile of the Dry Cleaning Industry. Hard copies of the manual and profile of the dry cleaning industry can be obtained from the National Service Center for Environmental Publications via the World Wide Web (<http://www.epa.gov/ncepihom/>) or by telephone at (800) 490-9198.

In addition, because of the potential health and environmental concerns associated with "perc," EPA has been working with stakeholders from the dry cleaning industry and public interest groups to evaluate cleaning process controls and new technologies. This project is part of EPA's Design for the Environment Program (DfE), which helps businesses incorporate

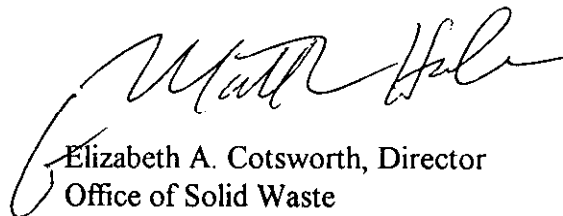
environmental considerations into the design and redesign of products, processes, and technical and management systems. The DfE program forms voluntary partnerships with industry, universities, research institutions, public interest groups, and other government agencies. The website for the Design for the Environment Program is www.epa.gov/dfe. Information relevant to "perc" and the dry cleaning industry is located in the Textile and Garment Initiative section. One can also contact DfE directly at (202) 260-1678.

Other federal agencies or groups that make safety information about "perc" and the dry cleaning industry available to the public include:

- American Conference of Governmental Industrial Hygienists, (513) 742-2020
- Consumer Product Safety Commission, (301) 504-0994
- National Institute for Environmental Health Sciences, (800) 643-4794
- National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH), (800) 356-4674

Thank you for the opportunity to assist you in responding to your constituent.

Sincerely,



Elizabeth A. Cotsworth, Director
Office of Solid Waste

Enclosures
cc: Geri D. Palast